

Hi my name is _____ and this is the 8th principle minute. With the adoption of the 8th Principle, our congregation committed to dismantle racism, beginning within our walls.

We all know that person who makes every discussion about themselves. It could be as blatant as a man inserting his sprained ankle into a discussion by a group of women about difficult labor, or it could be as subtle as bringing up a financial loss from a real estate crash when the subject is the multi-generational impact of red-lining.

When the topic is about the impacts of racism and the response is to make the story about white people it is called “white centering”. Perhaps the most blatant example is when someone responds to “Black Lives Matter” with “All Lives Matter”. The effect is to silence the victims; to minimize their pain; to cause new, fresh injury.

Saying “all lives matter” is often an intentional effort to draw attention away from the impacts of racism, but white centering can also happen as a result of good intentions. White allies must be careful about attempting to show empathy through sharing what they perceive to be similar experiences.

Perhaps one of the most difficult challenges we face in living up to our 8th Principle is how to not white-center our discussions, including the discussion about white centering. First U is a diverse community, not as diverse as we’d like, but diverse nonetheless. Every 8th principle minute, every racial justice discussion, every sermon, every activity must be undertaken with that knowledge. We must go to great pains to avoid linguistic assumptions about our composition.

Together we will continue this journey toward spiritual wholeness, build a beloved community, educate ourselves and discuss what it means to develop a culture of being accountably anti-racist. We will continue to look at our own practices, identity, and stories with a new lens to dismantle the racism in ourselves and our institutions.